IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 12, 19, 23, 24, 29, 30, and 33 as shown below in the LISTING OF CLAIMS.

Claims 1-11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising culturing coryneform bacteria which include an overexpressed sigD gene having the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, in a medium suitable for the expression of the sigD gene to thereby produce L-amino acids, wherein overexpression is achieved by increasing the copy number of said polynucleotide or by operably linking a promoter to said gene.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein the L-amino acids are lysine.

Claim 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, further comprising isolating the L-amino acid.

Claims 17and 18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method according to claim 12, wherein overexpression is achieved by transforming said ~~the~~ bacteria ~~have been transformed~~ with a plasmid vector which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claims 20-22 (cancelled)

Claim 23 (currently amended): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are overexpressed; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

a ~~dapA~~ gene which encodes dihydrodipicolinate synthase,

a ~~gap~~ gene which encodes glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase,

a ~~tpi~~ gene which encodes triosephosphate isomerase,

a ~~pgk~~ gene which encodes 3-phosphoglycerate kinase,

a ~~zwf~~ gene which encodes glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase,

a ~~pyc~~ gene which encodes pyruvate carboxylase,

a ~~mqo~~ gene which encodes malate-quinone-oxidoreductase,

a ~~lysC~~ gene which encodes a ~~feedback-resistant~~ aspartate kinase,

~~a lysE gene which encodes a protein for lysine export,~~

a ~~hom~~ gene which encodes homoserine dehydrogenase,

a ~~ilvA~~ gene which encodes threonine dehydratase,

~~a ilvA(Fbr) gene which encodes a feedback-resistant threonine dehydratase~~,

a ~~ilvBN~~ gene which encodes acetohydroxy acid synthase,

a ~~ilvD~~ gene which encodes dihydroxy acid dehydratase, and

a ~~zwal~~ gene which encodes a Zwa1 protein.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are eliminated; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

a ~~pck~~ gene which encodes phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase,

a ~~pgi~~ gene which encodes glucose-6-phosphate isomerase, and

a ~~poxB~~ gene which encodes pyruvate oxidase~~,~~

~~a zwa2 gene which encodes a Zwa2 protein~~.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria are Corynebacterium glutamicum.

Claims 26-28 (cancelled)

Claim 29 (currently amended): A ~~The~~ process for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising ~~according to claim 12, wherein said~~

culturing a coryneform bacterium which comprises an overexpressed polynucleotide ~~sequence includes~~ consisting of the nucleotides 301 to 864 of SEQ ID NO: 1, in a medium suitable for the expression of a sigD gene to thereby produce L-amino acids, wherein overexpression is achieved by transforming said bacteria with a vector comprising said polynucleotide.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A process for producing L-amino acids comprising:

a) ~~transforming a Coryneform bacterium with a vector which includes a sigD gene having the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said sigD gene is under the control of a promoter which allows the overexpression of said sigD gene;~~

~~b)~~ culturing ~~said~~ coryneform bacteria which comprise the polynucleotide of SEQ ID NO:1, in a medium suitable for expression of the sigD gene to thereby produce L-amino acids, wherein overexpression is achieved by transforming said bacteria with a vector comprising said polynucleotide; and

~~c)~~ b) isolating the L-amino acids.

Claim 31 (currently amended): A method for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising:

culturing coryneform bacteria, which include an overexpressed sigD gene having a polynucleotide sequence which encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, in a medium suitable for the expression of the sigD to thereby produce L-amino acids, wherein overexpression is achieved by increasing the copy number of said polynucleotide or by operably linking a promoter to said gene.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method according to claim 31, further comprising isolating the L-amino acids.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The method according to claim 31, wherein said increased copy number is achieved by transforming said coryneform ~~the~~ bacteria ~~have been transformed~~ with a plasmid vector which comprises ~~the~~ a nucleotide sequence ~~of SEQ ID NO: 1~~ which encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The method according to claim 31, wherein the coryneform bacteria produce L-lysine.

Claim 35 (currently amended): The ~~A~~ method according to claim 31, wherein the bacteria are Corynebacterium glutamicum.